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## MMPA Bulletin - January/February 1996

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### The 1996 List of Fisheries Has Been Published!

The 1996 List of Fisheries was published in the Federal Register on December 28, 1995. This list groups U.S. commercial fisheries into categories based on the annual level of marine mammal serious injury and mortality incidental to fishing operations.

New regulations governing interactions between marine mammals and commercial fisheries were published on August 30, 1995. Under these regulations, NMFS must publish a list of all U.S. commercial fisheries at least annually. Fisheries are placed into Category I, II, or III based on the annual level of marine mammal serious injury and mortality incidental to commercial fishing operations relative to the potential biological removal level (PBR) of a particular marine mammal species. These new definitions of Category I, II, and III fisheries provide a species-specific approach that allow NMFS to focus management actions toward those fisheries that have frequent or occasional incidental serious injuries and mortalities of marine mammals of particular concern.

Many fisheries have changed categories since the last List of Fisheries was published in 1994. Most changes have resulted in a fishery being moved from Category II to Category III. However, new information recently collected or analyzed resulted in moving the following three fisheries from Category III to Category II: the southeast Alaska salmon purse seine fishery, the North Carolina haul seine fishery, and the Atlantic midwater trawl fishery (includes those species listed in the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan). In addition, the following three fisheries are new to the List of Fisheries and have been placed in Category II: the Oregon swordfish surface longline fishery, the Alaska pair trawl fishery, and the North Carolina roe mullet stop net fishery. NMFS is currently in the process of contacting participants in these fisheries to notify them of the requirements of Category II fisheries.

Participants in fisheries that have been placed in Category I or II must register with NMFS, pay a registration fee of \$25, and carry an observer if requested. Those fishers participating in Category I or II fisheries in Oregon and Washington do not need to pay the registration fee, as registration

under the MMPA has been coordinated with these states' fishery registration process at no additional cost. Participants in Category III fisheries do not have to register with NMFS. All fishers, regardless of the category of their fishery, must report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals that occur incidental to their fishing operations within 48 hours.

NMFS received many comments on the 1996 proposed List of Fisheries, and, as always, we appreciate your involvement. We anticipate publishing a proposed List of Fisheries for 1997 during the early summer of 1996, and hope that you will continue to be involved in this part of the regulatory process.

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## **Effective Date of 1995 List Extended**

The 1995 List of Fisheries will be in effect until March 31, 1996, and on April 1 the 1996 list will go into effect. The original effective date of the 1996 list was to be January 1, 1996; however, the delay in publishing the final list has prevented NMFS from providing sufficient notice to vessel owners participating in Category I and II fisheries of their requirement to register. As a result, all vessel owners that obtained a marine mammal exemption certificate in 1993, 1994, or 1995, will continue to be exempted from the take prohibitions of the MMPA until March 31, 1996.

NMFS is currently mailing out new registration forms to vessel owners and operators. Those who will participate in a Category I or II fishery on or shortly after April 1, 1996 must return their registration form by March 1 to insure that NMFS can process their application and issue an authorization certificate by April 1. Those who will participate in a Category I or II fishery in 1996 after April 1 must submit their registration form at least 30 days before they expect to start fishing. For more information, contact Robyn Angliss at 301-713-2322.

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## **1996 List of Fisheries**

The following are those fisheries classified in Category I and II in the 1996 List of Fisheries along with the marine mammal species documented as incidentally killed or injured in those fisheries. Marine mammals that are listed under the ESA are denoted with a +; those that have been designated as strategic under the MMPA are denoted with an \*.

## **1996 List of Fisheries**

<b>Fishery Description (Estimated # of Participants)</b>	<b>Marine Mammal Species Incidentally Killed/Injured</b>
<b>Pacific Ocean</b>	
<b>Category I:</b>	
CA angel shark/halibut and other species large mesh (>3.5in) set gillnet fishery (80)	Harbor porpoise, Common dolphin, California sea lion, Harbor seal, Northern elephant seal
CA/OR thresher shark/swordfish drift gillnet fishery (150)	Steller sea lion*+, Sperm whale*+ , Dall s porpoise, Pacific white-sided dolphin, Common dolphin, Northern right whale dolphin, Shortfinned pilot whale+, Beaked whales (many species), Pygmy sperm whale*, California sea lion, Harbor seal, Northern elephant seal, Harbor porpoise, Humpback whale*+
<b>Category II:</b>	
AK Prince William Sound salmon drift gillnet (509)	Steller sea lion*+, Northern fur seal*, Harbor seal, Pacific whitesided dolphin, Harbor porpoise, Dall s porpoise
AK Peninsula/ Aleutians salmon drift gillnet (107)	Northern fur seal*, Harbor seal, Harbor porpoise, Dall s porpoise, Northern (Alaska) sea otter
AK Peninsula/Aleutian Island salmon set gillnet (120)	Steller sea lion*+, Harbor porpoise
Southeast Alaska salmon drift gillnet fishery (443)	Steller sea lion*+, Harbor seal, Pacific whitesided dolphin, Harbor porpoise, Dall s porpoise, Humpback whale*+
AK Cook Inlet drift gillnet (554)	Steller sea lion*+, Harbor seal, Harbor porpoise, Dall s porpoise
AK Cook Inlet salmon set gillnet (633)	Steller sea lion, Harbor seal, Harbor porpoise, Beluga
AK Yakutat salmon set gillnet (152)	Harbor seal
AK Kodiak salmon set gillnet (162)	Harbor seal, Harbor porpoise
AK Bristol Bay drift gillnet (1,741)	Steller sea lion*+, Northern fur seal*, Harbor seal, Beluga, Gray whale

AK Bristol Bay set gillnet (888)	Harbor seal, Beluga, Gray whale
AK Metlakatla/ Annette Island salmon drift gillnet (60)	None documented
WA Puget Sound Region salmon drift gillnet fishery (Treaty Indian fishing excluded) (1,044)	Harbor porpoise, Dall s porpoise, Harbor seal
CA anchovy, mackerel, tuna purse seine (150)	Bottlenose dolphin, California sea lion, Harbor seal
AK Southeast salmon purse seine(443)	Humpback whale*+
AK pair trawl (2)	None documented
OR swordfish surface longline fishery (30)	None documented
<b>ATLANTIC OCEAN</b>	
<b>Category I:</b>	
U.S. Atlantic large pelagics pair trawl (7)	Risso s dolphin, Longfinned pilot whale*, Common dolphin*, Bottlenose dolphin*
Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico large pelagics drift gillnet (75)	North Atlantic right whale*+, Humpback whale*+, Sperm whale, Dwarf sperm whale*, Pygmy sperm whale*, Beaked whales*, Risso s dolphin, Longfinned pilot whale*, Shortfinned pilot whale*, Atlantic whitesided dolphin*, Common dolphin*, Atlantic and Pantropical spotted dolphin*, Striped dolphin, Spinner dolphin, Bottlenose dolphin*, Harbor porpoise*
New England multispecies sink gillnet (including species as defined in the Multispecies Fisheries Management Plan and spiny dogfish and monkfish) (341)	North Atlantic right whale*+, Humpback whale*+, Minke whale, Killer whale, Atlantic whitesided dolphin*, Striped dolphin, Bottlenose dolphin, Harbor porpoise*, Harbor seal, Gray seal, Common dolphin, Fin whale, Spotted dolphin, False killer whale, Harp seal
Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico large pelagics longline (361)	Humpback whale*+, Minke whale, Risso s dolphin, Longfinned pilot whale*, Shortfinned pilot whale*, Common dolphin*, Atlantic and Pantropical spotted dolphin, Striped dolphin, Bottlenose dolphin*, Harbor porpoise*
<b>Category II:</b>	
MidAtlantic coastal gillnet fishery (>655)	Humpback whale*+, Minke whale, Bottlenose dolphin*, Bottlenose dolphin*+, Harbor porpoise*

Gulf of Maine small pelagics surface gillnet (133)	Humpback whale*+, Atlantic whitesided dolphin*, Harbor seal
Southeastern U.S. Atlantic shark gillnet (10)	Bottlenose dolphin*, North Atlantic right whale*+
Atlantic squid, mackerel, butterfish trawl (620)	Common dolphin*, Risso's dolphin*, Longfinned pilot whale*, Shortfinned pilot whale*, Atlantic whitesided dolphin*
North Carolina haul seine (unknown)	Bottlenose dolphin*, Harbor porpoise*
North Carolina roe mullet stop net (13)	Bottlenose dolphin*

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## Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Act:

### *Spotlight on the Stranding Network*

In 1992 the Congress enacted the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Act (MMHSRA), which became Title IV of the MMPA. Title IV has three basic components: statutory recognition of the marine mammal stranding networks, procedures for responding to unusual mortality events affecting marine mammals, and a National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank. As part of an effort to cover the entire scope of the MMHSRA, this issue presents information on the first of these components -- marine mammal strandings and the stranding network. Other components of the MMHSRA will be covered in subsequent issues.

A Marine Mammal Stranding Network has been established in each coastal state. Most members of the Stranding Network are volunteers who respond to both live and dead strandings of cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) and pinnipeds (seals and sea lions). Volunteers must satisfy minimum requirements of experience with marine mammals in order to be issued letters of authorization by the appropriate NMFS Regional Office for Network participation.

Although strandings are perceived as rare events, each year there are some 3,000 strandings reported in the United States. Seals and sea lions account for about 2,000 of the strandings. Of the 1,000 cetacean strandings, more than half involve bottlenose dolphins, but significant numbers of pygmy sperm whales, harbor porpoises, and common dolphins also strand each year. Stranding Network members rehabilitate and release to the wild several hundred marine mammals. Although most of the animals released are seals and sea lions, the number of cetaceans successfully treated has risen in the last few years.

Even though live strandings receive a great deal of attention from the public, the study of animals that strand dead can provide valuable information. To scientists, these stranded animals represent a research opportunity that might not otherwise be available. Network members are required to

collect certain basic biological data including species, sex, length, location, and any evidence of human interaction. In addition, they are encouraged to collect other data and tissues that can be used for scientific analyses. Even the most basic information can provide information on the range of specific populations and population dynamics. For example, recent stranding data indicate that both harbor seals and Arctic seals on the east coast may be expanding their range to the south.

Many Stranding Network members work beyond the basic data collection requirements. Additional research has provided information on:

- ! Disease in wild marine mammal populations,
- ! Mortality rates,
- ! Life history parameters,
- ! Population genetics
- ! Types, levels, and effects of contaminants, and
- ! Potentially serious human interactions.

From a management perspective, it's important for NMFS to be aware of serious diseases and human interactions that may be contributing to marine mammal deaths. By providing baseline data, stranding records can alert us to increases in mortality rates even if they cannot provide total mortality levels. Examinations of carcasses also provide information on potentially serious human interactions. For example, strandings of seriously endangered right whales in the eastern U.S. have shown that ship collisions are a significant source of mortality. Examinations of stranded harbor porpoises on both the east and west coasts alerted NMFS to serious interactions with coastal gillnet fisheries.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER A STRANDED MARINE MAMMAL**

**Do not attempt to move or treat the animal yourself!** Among the problems that have occurred are well-meaning individuals who pick up seal pups that they think are abandoned, or attempt to return live cetaceans to the water. In the case of seals, they commonly haul out on land for extended periods to rest and bear their young. Pups may be left behind on the beach while the mother feeds. On both coasts, it is Network policy to observe such animals for a period of time before taking action. In the case of single strandings of live cetaceans, researchers have found that cetaceans almost always strand because of serious illness or injury. Returning such an animal to the water postpones examination and treatment and often results in the cetacean restranding in even worse condition. Live stranded animals also have the potential of transmitting disease or seriously injuring untrained personnel. As is the case with any dead animal carcass, dead marine mammals may transmit pathogens.

**Notify authorities** of either live or dead stranded marine mammals so that trained members of the Stranding Network can be contacted immediately. Such authorities include local police or marine patrols, state fish and wildlife agencies, NMFS, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Time is critical! In the case of a live marine mammal, it is important for Network members to examine an animal, administer first aid, and start a treatment regime as soon as possible. In the case of dead animals, carcasses decompose quickly and useful information may be lost.